

Monday, 21 September 2026

Footy finals fever fires up TV audiences

AFL Finals series on Seven reaches 9.1 million, total TV audience up 9%

The **Australian Football League** has cemented its position as the most-watched winter sport in the country, with the Seven Network's live and free coverage of the **AFL Finals** series reaching 9.1 million on Seven and [7plus Sport](#) and boosting its total TV audience 9% compared to the 2025 Finals.

This year's Finals had a national total TV audience of 1.12 million, up from 1.03 million in 2025. On 7plus Sport alone they had 209,000 viewers, up 62% from 129,000 last year.

From the start of the 2026 Premiership Season on 5 March to the Preliminary Final between Hawthorn and the Brisbane Lions on Saturday, Seven's AFL coverage reached 17.25 million Australians – 2.18 million or 14% more than the 2026 NRL season so far.

Friday's Sydney Swans vs Fremantle clash was the most watched game this year, reaching 3.73 million people nationally, with a national total TV audience of 1.59 million, up 21% on the same match last year. More than 308,000 people tuned in on 7plus Sport, which was the highest 7plus AFL audience this year.

Saturdays' showdown between Hawthorn and Brisbane reached 3.35 million and had a national total TV audience of 1.48 million, the second highest audience this year.

All of the 2026 Finals games on Seven were #1 in their timeslots in all people, 25 to 54s, 16 to 39s and grocery shoppers.

Seven Network Head of AFL and Sport Innovation, Gary O'Keeffe, said: "What an extraordinary weekend of football and a brilliant way to launch into what promises to be a massive **AFL Grand Final** Week on Seven and 7plus Sport.

"Fremantle booked its place in just its second **AFL Grand Final**, kicking off an enormous week for the entire state of Western Australia, as the Dockers continue their hunt for that elusive maiden premiership.

"Then on Saturday, we witnessed one of the great preliminary finals, with Brisbane producing another remarkable performance over the Hawks to storm into a fourth consecutive Grand Final. Now, all roads lead to the biggest day on the footy calendar – but there's an enormous week of football ahead on Seven and 7plus first," he said.

“It begins with the **2026 Charles Brownlow Medal** tonight, followed by **The Agenda Setters** on Tuesday, before Wednesday night’s premiere of **Centimetre Perfect**, our feature-length documentary celebrating the extraordinary life and career of legendary broadcaster Dennis Cometti. Then **AFLW** and **The Front Bar** take centre stage on Thursday night, followed by more **AFLW** action in prime time on Friday. Then, Seven will deliver every moment of **AFL Grand Final Day** from 7.00am, live, free and exclusively on Seven and 7plus Sport.

“It’s one of the biggest weekends of the Australian sporting calendar, and we can’t wait to bring fans right across Australia along for every moment,” O’Keeffe said.

Seven’s Director of Sales, Television and Streaming, Katie Finney, said: “The growth in audience across the **AFL Finals** proves why live sport is one of the most effective ways for brands to connect with Australians at scale. The momentum we’ve seen across 7plus Sport reflects the growing demand from fans to watch the game live and free, wherever they are, creating more opportunities for advertisers to engage with our audiences.

“With the AFL Grand Final on Saturday, brands have a unique chance to be part of one of the biggest shared moments in Australia and reach millions of fans in one place.”

The **2026 AFL Grand Final** is live, free and exclusively on Seven and 7plus Sport this Saturday. Seven’s coverage kicks off at 7.00am AEST with **Weekend Sunrise** from the MCG, before Seven’s team of AFL experts steer the coverage from 9.00am AEST.

2026 AFL Finals on Seven:

Friday, 18 September: Fremantle vs Sydney Swans: national reach 3.73 million, national audience 1.59 million.

Saturday, 19 September: Brisbane Lions vs Hawthorn: national reach 3.35 million, national audience 1.48 million.

Friday, 4 September: Geelong Cats vs Carlton: national reach 2.81 million, national audience 1.08 million.

Friday, 11 September: Fremantle vs Geelong Cats: national reach 2.66 million, national audience 1.2 million.

Thursday, 3 September: Fremantle vs Hawthorn: national reach 2.55 million, national audience 1.09 million.

Friday, 28 August: Western Bulldogs vs Collingwood: national reach 2.54 million, national audience 966,000.



Saturday, 12 September: Brisbane Lions vs Adelaide Crows: national reach 2.5 million, national audience 975,000.

Saturday, 5 September: Adelaide Crows vs Western Bulldogs: national reach 2.36 million, national audience 960,000.

Saturday, 29 August: Melbourne vs Carlton: national reach 2.21 million, national audience 894,000.

Saturday, 5 September: Sydney Swans vs Brisbane Lions: national reach 2.06 million, national audience 786,000.

For more information, please contact:

Neil Shoebridge
M: 0417 511 012
E: neil@skmediagroup.com.au

Emma Francis
Head of Communications – Sport
M: 0415 721 413
E: efrancis@seven.com.au

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Source: VOZ 5.0 national. Average audience and come reach. AFL Finals YOY vs same time last year (ex. Wildcard). AFL vs NRL reach includes pre/post game. Data cons7 (last seven days overnight).